

April 14, 1993

Dr. Donald A. Henderson
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health
and Science - Designate
Public Health Service
Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building, Room 701H
2000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Henderson:

I am writing to invite you to participate in a meeting at the River House of the Aspen Institute's Wye Plantation on May 28-29, 1993. The Committee on International Security and Arms Control (CISAC) of the National Academy of Sciences has a Working Group on Biological Weapons Control, which I chair (see attached list of working group members). The Working Group was formed in 1986 and for four years met regularly with a counterpart group of scientists from the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The two groups made significant progress on defining possible standards for acceptable and unacceptable research activities and other topics of mutual interest.

Unfortunately, the groups have not met since December 1990. We are hoping to revive their work, and have scheduled a planning meeting in late May to discuss new joint activities. The Russian Academy counterpart group is now headed by Academician Rem Petrov, Vice President of the Russian Academy for Life Sciences and the RAN delegation will include four scientists (Academician Petrov; Academician Vadim Ivanov, Shemyakin Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry; Academician Lev Sandakchiev, Director of Scientific [sic] and Production of Association "Vector," Novosibirsk Region; and Academician Vladimir Bolshakov, Director of Institute for Plants and Animals, Sverdlovsk). However, we are also inviting a number of Russian and American scientists and government officials to attend the meeting to assist us with the planning process. We hope that you will be able to join us, even if for only a portion of the meeting.

There is a cloud, of course, on the credibility of all of the academies' activities, highlighted by President Yeltsin's revelations concerning the Sverdlovsk (1979) anthrax epidemic, and Soviet biological weapons programs. We are all very much encouraged by the candor with which he is addressing these past offenses. One subject for discussion at the planning meeting will be how to (1) further the complete investigation and documentation of that lamentable history, and (2) clearly

establish the academies' distance from it, so as to dispel those clouds, and provide a confident basis for candid discourse.

We want very much to transcend the past, however, and explore ways in which we can encourage and support a regime of disclosure to promote efforts to curb the proliferation of biological weapons. In light of the perils of proliferation, we believe it is important to reinforce our mutual understanding and perhaps develop strategies for Russian-American cooperation on nonproliferation. In addition, American scientists would like to find all possible avenues of support for biomedical research in the CIS.

We thus have a full agenda for the planning session. Among the topics we propose to discuss are:

- o Bilateral cooperation on nonproliferation, including
 - (a) verification and confidence-building measures for the Biological Weapons Convention,
 - (b) establishing standards for permissible and impermissible activities under the Convention,
 - (c) strategies to promote increased transparency and disclosure, and
 - (d) cooperation in epidemiological surveillance
- o Conversion of military or military-related facilities to civilian purposes
- o Cooperative research on anthrax pathogenicity and emerging pathogens
- o Update and implications of smallpox eradication campaign

CISAC would cover the costs of all expenses for the meeting. We would also be happy to arrange transportation for you to and from the meeting. The meeting will begin with dinner on Thursday, May 27th, with the formal discussions taking place all day on Friday, and until mid-afternoon on Saturday, after which the group will return to Washington. As I mentioned earlier, you would be welcome for any or all of the discussions.

Someone from the CISAC staff will call your office later this week to find out if you will be available for the meeting. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jo Husbands, Director of CISAC. Her telephone number is 202-334-2811. We look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will be able to join us.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Working Group Chair